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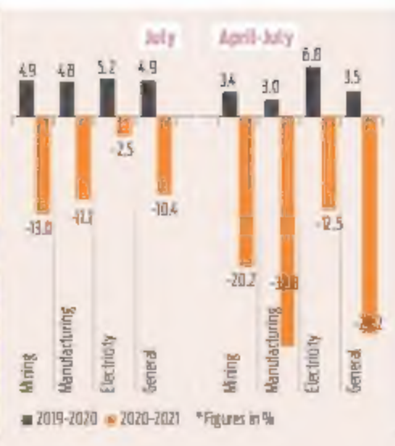

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FACTORY OUTPUT SHRINKS FOR 5TH MONTH IN A ROW IN JULY

With industrial activities hit hard by Covid-19, the month's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) contracted by 10.4%

MANUFACTURING PICKS UP AS CURBS EASE

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said the IIP fell because a large number of industrial units have not been functioning since late March due to the lockdown. However, with the easing of restriction industrial activity seems to have picked up. The index for July stands at 118.1 points—better than 108.9 in June, 89.5 in May and 54 in April

CONSUMER DURABLES OUTPUT DOWN 23%

- Manufacturing sector recorded a decline of 11.1% in July as against a growth of 4.8 per cent in same month last year
- Consumer durables output declined by a whopping 23.6%
- Aditi Nayar, principal economist at ICRA, said the pace of IIP contraction could ease further to 6-8% in August | P13

29.2%

IS HOW MUCH THE IIP FOR APRIL-JULY PERIOD HAS CONTRACTED

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILUPPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Five-point mechanism to defuse LAC tension

India, China agree on reducing tension, analysts see it as the first important step to give political guidence on border disengagement

PUSHKAR BANAKAR AND MAYANK SINGH @New Delhi

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar (left) and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi ahead of their talks on the sidelines of the SCO meeting in Moscow | PTI

A five-point mechanism to resolve the ongoing tension between Indian and China in eastern Ladakh along the Line of Actual Control became the talking point on Friday, with analysts seeing it as the first important step in the right direction, as it gives political guidance for disengagement.

The mechanism was arrived at during a bilateral meeting between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Moscow on Thursday on the sidelines of the SCO foreign ministers' meeting.

In a joint statement issued early Friday, the two leaders said that they should not allow differences to become disputes. "The two Foreign Ministers agreed that the current situation in the border areas is not in the interest of either side. They agreed therefore that the border troops of both sides should continue their dialogue, quickly disengage, maintain proper distance and ease tensions," the statement added.

"Indian partners expressed commitment to cooperation and dialogue for deescalating tensions. We are ready to take conciliatory steps. The most important thing is to avoid new violations of the obligations on the border. Troops and equipment should be withdrawn from the LAC," Wang Yi said at a joint press conference with Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov a day after his meeting with Jaishankar.

"Both reiterating that channels of communication will remain open and that soon the SR level meeting will take place, demonstrates that there is a silver lining as regards solving the standoffs through diplomacy. This ultimately may pave way for another Modi-Xi meeting that could be a face saver to both the sides," said B R Deepak, Sinologist and Chairperson of the Centre for Chinese and South Asian Studies at JNU.

Sources said during the meeting, Jaishankar highlighted India's strong concerns at the amassing of Chinese troops with equipment along the LAC.

The conciliatory tone of the statement seems to have trickled to the ground with sources saying both sides have exercised restraint on the LAC and there has been no aggressive action for the past 24 hours.

CONTINUED ON: P9

Make in K'taka: 487 units set up shop in 6 months

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Bengaluru

AMID the pandemic and economic slowdown, a good number of manufacturing units are keen to start operations in Karnataka.

In the six months since March 2020, 487 new manufacturing units registered in the State, generating close to 34,000 new jobs.

Factory registration is mandated under the Karnataka Factories Act, and the State government issues a licence to start a manufacturing unit that employs 20 or more people. In 2019 (January to December), as many as 875 factories were registered across Karnataka.

Most of them are in operation, according to officials from the Department of Factories and Boilers.

This year, from March 2020 to August-end, 487 factories were registered, and employed 33,625 people, including 10,622 women.

CONTINUED ON: P7

State is top performer in startup ecosystems

BISMAH MALIK @Bengaluru

KARNATAKA has emerged as a top performer, along with Kerala, in providing a strong ecosystem for startups, according to the startup ranking 2019 of states and Union Territories, released by the Department of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on Friday.

The second edition of the ranking lists Gujarat (among states) and Andaman & Nicobar Island (UTs) as the best performers with 100 percentile score.

The state-wise performances were evaluated on seven parameters including institutional support, easing compliances, relaxation in public procurement norms, incubation, seed funding and venture funding support, awareness and outreach. A total of 22 states and three UTs participated in the exercise.

The other states were classified as leaders, aspiring leaders and emerging startup ecosystems. P13

Team Rahul gets slots in Cong rejig

RICHA SHARMA @New Delhi

IN a major organisational reshuffle, the Congress on Friday dropped Ghulam Nabi Azad, the senior-most among 23 letter writers, as AICC general secretary, and constituted a six member special committee — having a mix of both young and old leaders — to assist Congress chief Sonia Gandhi in running the party till a new president is elected.

The reshuffle comes days after a group of 23 leaders wrote to Sonia, seeking collective leadership and organisational elections, starting with the Congress Working Committee (CWC). But with the reconstitution of the CWC, there is little scope for elections to the party's highest decision-making body.

According to party sources, many of Team Rahul's members have been suitably accommodated.

"In a balancing act, the Congress president ensured that dissenters remain part of the CWC but also sent a strong signal to them by ensuring that Azad and Sharma are kept out of the special committee. Though Wasnik, one of the letter writers, has been included in the team of six, he is unlikely to go against her close aide Ahmed Patel," said a senior party leader. CONTINUED ON: P10

Surjewala is Congress state in-charge

The Congress on Friday appointed Randeep Singh Surjewala as the party general secretary in charge of Karnataka, replacing KC Venugopal. Former KPCC chief Dinesh Gundu Rao has been given charge of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Goa, while H K Patil is in charge of Maharashtra. P3

EXPRESS READ

JEE-Main result out; 24 score 100 percentile

New Delhi: The results of the JEE-Mains was announced on Friday with 24 students scoring 100 percentile in the engineering entrance exam which was postponed twice in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. While Telangana has the maximum 100 percentile scorers at eight, Delhi is at the second spot with five followed by Rajasthan (4), Andhra Pradesh (3), Haryana (2) and one candidate each from Gujarat and Maharashtra. The JEE-Mains for admission to engineering colleges was conducted from September 1 to 6.

NLAT 2020

Hold test, don't declare results, SC tells NLSIU

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Friday gave its nod to the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru, to hold a separate entrance examination, NLAT-2020, on Saturday, but restrained it from announcing the results and admitting any student till the pendency of the plea.

The court was hearing a plea filed by former NLSIU vice-chancellor Professor R Venkata Rao and the parent of an aspirant, challenging the decision of the university to hold a separate entrance exam.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said it is an important matter and needs to be heard, and issued notice to the university and its Vice-Chancellor Professor Sudhir Krishnaswamy and sought their response by September 16. The bench said that since the examination is scheduled to be held on Saturday, it can be conducted, but neither results nor any admission of students can be done. P7

90 pc of marijuana comes from Maoist-hit states, other places

RAMU PATIL @Bengaluru

WITH Karnataka continuing its crackdown on drug peddlers, it has now come to light that nearly 90 per cent of the marijuana (ganja) supplied to the state comes from Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and other states. Over the last few days, the Karnataka police have seized huge quantities of ganja from several places, including a 1,350 kg-haul in Kalaburagi and 186 kg from Kolar Gold Fields (KGF). The ganja seized from Kalaburagi had come from Odisha.

Sources in the Home Department told The New Indian Express on Friday that ganja cultivated in Maoist-affected areas is being brought to the state and the Karnataka police are working in close coordination with their counterparts in those states to crack down on such illegal activities.

A change in strategy — going after the entire supply chain and not stopping with the arrests those involved in peddling small quantities of marijuana — is said to be the major reason for the seizure of huge quantities of ganja in the last few days, especially consignments coming from other states. CONTINUED ON: P6

Getting tough on drug menace

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai too have reiterated that the government will continue to take tough measures against the drug menace. Bommai had recently directed the state police chief to coordinate with other states.

Police take Pratik Shetty for a medical check-up on Friday | VINOD KUMAR T

Sandalwood drug racket case: Two more arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE Central Crime Branch (CCB) police have arrested two more people — Aditya Agarwal and Pratik Shetty — in connection with the Sandalwood drug racket on Friday.

Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Sandeep Patil said that Agarwal, who hails from Haryana, was working in Bengaluru. "He is a close associate of Viren Khanna and has regular contact with drug peddlers. A warrant was procured and his house was searched before he was arrested". P6

GRUESOME CRIME

Three found murdered in Mandya temple

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mysuru

Police inspect ransacked hundis at the Arkeshwara temple in Mandya on Friday.

THREE priests of the Arakeshwara Swamy temple on the outskirts of Mandya were found brutally murdered in the courtyard on Friday, sending shock waves in the district. The killers have ransacked the donation boxes and fled with all the currency notes, leaving behind the coins.

The deceased are Anand (40), Prakash (58) and Ganesh (55), all from Mandya district. The incident came to light on Friday morning when some villagers spotted the bodies lying in a pool of blood after they found the temple door open. Police suspect that the priests may have been killed in their sleep as there were no signs of resistance.

"We found the donation boxes thrown outside the temple premises after all the cash was removed. This suggests that it was a murder for gain and a case has been registered at the Mandya East police station. We are recording the statements of all those associated with the temple and also that of villagers," said an investigating officer. The dog squad and forensic team were also deployed at the scene of crime.

District In-charge Minister Narayana Gowda visited the temple and met the family members.

CONTINUED ON: P7

CM: Murder of priests disturbing

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa termed the murder of the priests of the Arkeshwara temple as disturbing, and announced an ex-gratia of ₹5 lakh to the kin of each of the deceased.